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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine factors that influence middle and high school students' use of public libraries, the type of materials they use, and the frequency with which students use public libraries compared to the students' use of school library media centers. A questionnaire was used as the data gathering instrument. It was conducted on site at three randomly selected DeKalb County (Georgia) library branches. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. The study found that 58% of the students find needed materials in the public library. Only 22% indicated they find the materials they need in the school library media center. Parents and guardians were cited by 68% of the students as having the most influence on their public library behavior. Teachers were the most influential elements in the students' use of the school media center with media specialists having little influence on the students' library use behavior. The questionnaire is included in the appendix. (Contains 19 references.) (JLB)

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USE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES BY MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA

by

EMMANUEL ENUJIOKE

A SCHOLARLY PAPER

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
the Degree of Educational Specialist in library
Media Technology in the Department
of Curriculum and Instruction
in the College of Education
Georgia State University

Atlanta, Georgia

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS INFLUENCING MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENTS' USE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

by

EMMANUEL ENUJIOKE

Purpose

The Purpose of this study was to determine factors that influence middle and high school students' use of public libraries, the type of materials they use, and the frequency with which students use public libraries, compared to students' use of school library media centers.

Methods and Procedures

A questionnaire was designed as a data-gathering instrument. The survey was conducted on site at three randomly selected DeKalb County Library branches. Distribution and collection of data lasted for a period of six days, four hours each day. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program.

Results

The study found that 58% of students find needed materials in the public library. Only 22% indicated they find the materials they need in the school library media center. Parents and guardians were cited by 68% of students as having the most influence on their public library use behavior. Teachers were credited by 75% of the respondents as the most influential elements in students' use of the school library media center. Media specialists were found to have very little positive influence on students' library use behavior.

Conclusions

Middle and high school students use public libraries more often than they use school library media centers. Some of the factors responsible for this behavior include limited access to the school library media center, unavailability of materials for school assignments, inadequate bibliographic instructions in the school, and lack of communication between media specialists and teachers. To rectify these deficiencies in service, cooperative efforts between the public library and the school must be initiated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Prior to the creation of school libraries during the early part of the 19th century, public libraries provided the schools with reading materials both for the children and for curriculum support (Gates, 1976; Johnson & Harris, 1976). With the advent of school library media centers, providing appropriate materials to support the school curriculum became their responsibility. Although both of these institutions have continued to serve middle and high school students, among others, the degree to which public libraries provided services and met students' needs was largely unexamined.

Some research has shown that school children use more non-fiction materials from the school library media center but check out mostly leisure reading from the public library (Garland, 1989). But in a study of Metropolitan Toronto libraries (Hinchley, 1980), 31% of the users were students and 76% of those students used the public libraries for school assignments. Another study (Institute For Social Inquiry, 1990) showed that 94% of the 500 people surveyed believed that it was very important that the school teach children how to use libraries while 86% thought that it was very important for parents to teach children how to use the libraries. Although no library type was specified, it could be implied that those respondents who thought parents should do the job of teaching children had public libraries in mind, since public libraries are the most accessible to both parents and children. In another study (Development Associates, Inc., 1972), 35% of parents and children interviewed said that they obtained children's books

from the school library media centers.

Statement of the Problem

Even though it has been established that many high school students use academic libraries more than they do their own school libraries, they often do so at the instigation of their teachers (Miller and Russell, 1985), and that home-schooled students depend almost entirely on public libraries for their assignments. However, very little research has been done to determine whether middle and high school students use public libraries more than their school libraries, nor has research been done to determine factors influencing such preference. The purpose of this study was threefold:

1. To determine why middle and high school students use public libraries.
2. To determine what type of materials the students use in their public libraries.
3. To ascertain how frequently students use public libraries and school library media centers.

Significance of the Study

Several studies have been done on the following topics: the use of public libraries by home-schooled children (Schwartz, 1991; Madden, 1991, p. 23; LaRue and LaRue, 1991, p. 37); the use of academic libraries by school children (Miller and Russell, 1985; Craver, 1987); and cooperation between school and public libraries (Amey, 1974). Little, if any, has been done on the use of public libraries by middle and high school students and why they public libraries more than school library media centers.

The findings of this study could be used by both public librarians and library media specialists toward better collaborative efforts in serving this student population. Revelation of strengths and weaknesses in services could provide necessary information for better and more cost effective services to the middle and high school student clientele.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to middle and high school student users of the DeKalb Public Libraries who visited the DeKalb Public Libraries during the Fall quarter of 1993 and during the first eight weeks of Winter quarter, 1994.

Definition of Terms

Home-schooled Students - Students who, for whatever reason, are not enrolled in Public, Parochial, or Private Schools but receive all their education at home from either parents/guardians or tutors.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> It is the function of the Municipal Public Library to provide the printed and non-printed materials to meet the individual and group needs of its constituency for information, education, self-realization, recreation, and cultural growth and for assistance in carrying out their duties as citizens and members of the community. (Gates, 1976, p. 155)

This literature review focuses on previous research and literature germane to the use of public libraries by middle and high school students, the types of materials they utilize there, and the frequency of their public library use. Presented first is the Historical Background, followed by other subheadings: Students' Use of Public Libraries; Non-Public School Student Users of Public Libraries; Reasons For Students' Use of Public Libraries; and Summary. Rather than grouping the literature review around the research questions, this approach was followed to avoid redundancy, as most of the citations addressed more than one research question.

Historical Background

The school library first emerged in the early 19th century (Johnson & Harris, 1977, p. 206) as an outgrowth of the public library (Amey, 1974). But these early school libraries were used very little until the 1920s and 1930s, when the emphasis in education shifted from subject matter to the learner, and in the child-centered schools...giving to

each child the opportunity to develop all his [or her] potentials" (Gates, 1976, p. 167).

The public library has always been an agent of public education and remains so to day. "The history of the public library is a record of transition from a narrowly conservational function to a broad program directed toward the advance of popular education" (Shera, 1965, p. v). Some attempts at merging public and school libraries continue but such efforts have often been frustrated by a lack of role definition - among others problems (Amey, 1974).

Students' Use of Public Libraries

In a recent survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (cited in Mathews, et al., 1990), 50% of public library users were under the age of 18, while one in every four public library users was between the ages of 12 and 18. A study of users of Metropolitan Toronto libraries (Hinchley, 1980) found that 31% of the users were students (grade levels not indicated) and that of those students, 76% came to use the public library for school assignments while 57% came to use the public library on their own accord and without referrals, followed by 15% who were referred by friends. Those referred by teachers constituted a distant 4th or 9 percent.

Chelton (1984) believes that the easiest way to find who is served by the library is by conducting an annual school survey of middle and high school students, asking "whether or not they used the library the previous year." However, Chelton did not indicate the age or grade level of the children for whom materials were obtained. In one study (Development Associates Inc., 1972) parents and children were interviewed to determine

which type of library they used to obtain children's materials. Thirty-five percent said that they obtained children's materials from public libraries, while 34% said that they obtained children's materials from school libraries.

Non-Public School Student Users of Public Libraries

The present study focuses on public middle and high school students' use of public libraries. However, investigating public library use by students attending private, parochial, or home schools will contribute to the determination of some factors affecting library use behavior of the target subjects.

A study of parents of home-school students and educators in Ohio (Schwartz, 1991) found a middle and high school age population totally dependent on public libraries. These children and their parents frequently use public libraries. A survey in Whatcom County, Washington (Madden, 1991, p. 23), showed that "93% of home-schoolers use the public library as an area source and 54% do so on a weekly basis; 11% visit the library more than once a week". LaRue and LaRue (1991, p. 37) believe that "the public library accounts for a fourth of the curriculum" for home-schoolers.

Reasons For Students' Use of Public Libraries

Miller and Russell (1985) studied high school students' use of academic libraries and found that "inadequate bibliographic instruction, and inadequate provision of and/availability of reference tools in school libraries" are some of the obvious reasons for high school students' heavy dependence on the academic libraries.

A questionnaire designed by Miller and Russell was sent to 32 academic library

administrators and 385 high school student users of academic libraries. The survey was conducted for a period of two weeks. Three hundred and four respondents indicated that they used the academic library because the collection was superior to their high school collections. Two hundred and thirty-two found academic libraries' opening hours more convenient. Two hundred and twenty-five claimed they enjoyed better services in academic libraries, and 319 cited use of reference books as their reason for using academic libraries.

Miller and Russell (1985) also identified increasing censorship of school library materials, shortage of funds and students' increasing appetite for information as some of the factors that weakened the appeal of the school library, consequently sending students looking for better equipped libraries that could satisfy their information needs.

In a study of nonresident college students' library use, Groark (1974) found that public libraries were most frequently used by a majority of full-time students. Sixty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they used the public library "almost always or frequently" (p. 44). Indicated also in the study's findings was that these "students show a tendency not to use facilities other than the public libraries", and that "they used the public library mostly for school related purposes" (p. 68).

Some public librarians think that students come to use the public library because of "something they're not getting in the schools" (Clancy, cited in Rome, 1992). Caywood (1991) thinks that lack of clarity on the part of school teachers, when giving assignments, not only leads students to the public library for help, but often causes

students to turn to their parents for help. The parents, in turn, go to the public librarian for help with the assignments.

Latchkey children are an integral part of the middle and high school student population, but this group of students has been difficult to identify. The Services to Children Committee of the Public Library Association (cited in Feldman, 1990 p. 3) found that children go to public libraries for many reason, among which are:

1. They like libraries and library materials can meet some of their homework or recreational needs.
2. They live near a library and go there rather than being alone at home.
3. They have been told to use the library as a safe place when a parent or guardian is not available.

"It is virtually impossible to distinguish the true latchkey child from any other youthful library user" (Public Library Association, cited in Feldman, 1990, p. 3). Perceptions parents have of public libraries and school library media centers is another factor to consider when attempting to determine student's library use behavior. The library type parents perceive to provide their children with better and more thorough bibliographic instructions may help to determine which library type students prefer to use. A survey of 500 people in Connecticut was conducted to determine parents' perceptions and use of libraries (Institute For Social Inquiry, 1990); ninety-four percent of the respondents believed that it was very important that schools teach children how to use libraries, but eighty-six percent thought that it was very important for parents to teach children how to

use libraries. No library type was specified in the study, however, it can be inferred that those respondents who thought that parents should teach their children library use, implied the teaching of public library use. Apparently, of all the library types, the public library is the most easily accessible to parents and is the only library type from which a majority of the parents could check out library materials.

In a study of high school students' use of academic libraries (Craver, 1987), "more than one-third of them [500 students surveyed] noted that the school library lacked appropriate resources for completion of their assignments. Others stated that the school library was inaccessible during the evenings and on weekends and was located farther than academic libraries" (p. 54). Further, "a survey of 2,317 students in 158 high schools in 45 states regarding use of the school library and/or other types of libraries (Squire, Applebee, & Lucas, cited in Craver, 1987) revealed considerable student dissatisfaction with the school library and substantial borrowing of books from the public library, especially among seniors" (p. 59). Two years later, Hannigan (cited in Craver, 1987) found "a pattern of multiple library use" in 39% of the "academically talented high school students in the Metropolitan New York area" (p. 59).

Benford (cited in Craver, 1987, p. 60), found "a definite drop-off in the use of school libraries as students progressed to higher grade levels." This finding was supported by Miller (cited in Craver, 1987, p. 60). With age, students' use of school library media centers declines while their use of multiple library facilities increases.

Summary

Although public high and middle school students use their school libraries, their attraction to academic and public libraries tends to rise with age. Possible contributors to this phenomenon are such factors as restricted access to school libraries, lack of adequate reference materials, proximity to other libraries, and censorship. Middle and high school students use public libraries for various reasons. Some use public libraries for home-work assignments and some as a safe haven from "being home alone" until their parent or guardian picks them up. There are those serious-minded students whose quest for more information is not adequately satisfied by the school library media centers' "less than adequate collections."

One group (not the focus of this study) which is totally dependent on the public library is the home-schooled middle and high school student population. Having no access to public school library media centers, and not being able to check out materials from the academic libraries, this student population's only option is the public library. Research has shown, students' library type preference notwithstanding, that all library types contribute to meeting the information needs of young students, in varying degrees (Craver, 1987).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

This was a descriptive study using a questionnaire survey methodology. The purpose of the study was to determine factors influencing middle and high school students' use of public libraries, the type of materials used, and the frequency with which students use public libraries and school library media centers.

Population

The population for this study was middle and high school student users of DeKalb County public libraries. An up-to-date list of branch libraries in the system was obtained from DeKalb County Library Administration. From this list, a stratified sample of three branch libraries was randomly selected. Stratification was based on socioeconomic status as implied by geographic location in the county. From each stratum, the following branches were selected: in South DeKalb, the Wesley Chapel branch; in Central DeKalb, the Decatur branch and in North DeKalb, the Chamblee branch library. Permission was requested and obtained from the library administration for the survey instrument to be distributed by the researcher at the selected libraries. Questionnaires were given only to middle and high school student users who voluntarily agreed to participate. Those student users who were in a hurry were not pressured to complete the questionnaire.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed for the purpose of this study to determine factors that influence middle and high school students' public library use, the types of material students use in public libraries, and the frequency with which students use public libraries and school library media centers.

The questionnaire used a combination of yes/no, multiple choice, and open-ended responses. Questions 1, 2, and 3 provided demographic information. Questions 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 were designed to measure motivating factors for students' use of public libraries. Questions 9, and 10 were concerned with the second research question - the types of material used by students in public libraries. The third research question was measured by questions 11, 12, 13, and 14.

Members of the ELMT 885 (Research in Library Media Technology) class at the Georgia State University critiqued the survey instrument and offered useful suggestions. After necessary changes were made, the instrument was field tested by 15 middle and high school student users of the East Point Public Library.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed at selected sites for a period of two days each. Distribution lasted four hours each day of the survey period. The East Point Public Library, used to pilot the instrument, was not included. Data collection spanned a six-day period. This was considered necessary to include a better representative sample of student users with various schedules. Before passing out the questionnaire, a brief

explanation was made and any prospective respondent who did not fall within the population of the study was thanked and advised not to participate.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Cross tabulations and Chi-Square analyses were used to analyze data for students' use of public libraries, and students' frequency of public library and school library media center use.

Data packages were marked acc rding to the geographical location of the branch library. This provided an opportunity for a post hoc comparative analysis of socio-economic influence, if any, on students' library type preference. The results of this analysis could be useful for future research in this subject area. All data, both complete and incomplete, were included in the analysis. Incomplete data were identified as such.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence middle and high school students' use of public libraries, the type of materials this student population use, and the frequency with which students use both public libraries and school library media centers.

This survey was conducted on site at three DeKalb County Public Library branches for six consecutive days of four hours each, spending two days at each site. Four hundred surveys were distributed to walk-in students. Three hundred seventy-five surveys (93.8%) were returned. Sixty (16%) of these were incomplete and therefore unusable, leaving the study with 315 (84%) useable survey instruments.

Research Question 1

What factors influence middle and high school students to use public libraries? Survey questions 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 related to research question 1. To determine why students use public libraries, respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they find needed materials in public libraries.

Table 1

Frequency of finding material in the public library

Frequency	Number N=315	Percent
Rarely	28	8.9
Sometimes	105	33.3
Most of the time	182	57.8
Total	315	100.0

TABLE 2

Frequency of finding material in the public library by school type.

Type of School	Frequency N=315					
	Rarely	%	Sometimes	%	Most of the time	%
Private N=25	3	12	4	16	18	72
Public N=283	23	8.1	99	35	161	56
Parochial N=3	-	-	2	66.7	1	33.3
Home N=4	2	50	-	-	2	50

TABLE 3

Frequency of finding material in the

school library media center.

Choice	Frequency N=315	Percent
Rarely	97	30.8
Sometimes	150	47.6
Most of the time	68	21.6
Total	315	100

TABLE 4

Frequency of finding material in the

school library media center by school type.

Type of School	Frequency N=315					
	Rarely	%	Sometimes	%	Most of the time	%
Private N=25	12	48	8	32	5	20
Public n=283	83	29.3	140	49.5	60	21.2
Parochial N=3	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3
Home N=4	1	25	1	25	2	50

One hundred eighty-two (or 57.8%) of respondents indicated that most of the time they found what they were looking for in public libraries, compared to 68 (or 21.6%) of respondents indicating that most of the time they found what they sought in their school library media centers.

A cross tabulation of the survey question 1 with survey questions 4 and 5 (see table 2) shows that one-half of home-school respondents indicated that most of the time they equally found what they were looking for in both the public library and school library media centers. While 72% of the private school respondents indicated they found their needed materials most of the time in the public library, only 20% of them claimed similar experience with school library media centers as reported in table 4.
It is not clear how the home-school students find access to school library media center. It is likely they did not understand the question.

Respondents were instructed to "circle as many as apply" and therefore, total answers exceed figures presented in tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. Responses to the "other (please specify)" category are presented in Appendix D.

Table 5

Reason for use of Public Library

Choice	Frequency N=315	Percent
A place to wait for a ride home.	17	5.4
Easy to find materials.	177	56.2
To meet friends.	43	13.7
Library is close to home.	109	34.6
Variety of materials are available.	209	66.3
Good reference services.	205	65.1
Helpful library staff.	121	38.4
Freedom from parents and teachers.	54	17.1
Computer resources.	125	39.7
Others (please specify)	46	14.6

The following reasons were cited as being the most important using the public library: (1) the variety of available materials (66.23%); (2) good reference services (65.1%); (3) ease of finding materials (56.2%); (4) computer resources (39.7%); and (4) helpful library staff (38.4%). (see table 5).

Table 6

The person encouraging public library use.

Person	Frequency N=315	Percent
Parent/Guardian	214	67.9
Teacher	170	54.0
Media Specialist	39	12.4
Friend	58	18.4
Others (please specify)	94	29.8

Table 7

The person encouraging school library media use.

Person	Frequency N=315	Percent
Parent/Guardian	88	27.9
Teacher	235	74.6
Media Specialist	85	27.0
Friend	30	9.5
Others (please specify)	54	17.1

Parents and guardians (67%) were given by students as having the greatest influence on their public library use behavior. For the use of school library media centers, 75% of respondents credited their teachers as being the most influential elements. Media Specialists were far behind both parents/guardians and teachers.

Table 8

The person encouraging public library use

by school type.

Person	Frequency N=315		Percent					
	Private N=25		Public N=283		Parochial N=3		Home N=4	
Parent/Guardian	16	64%	193	68.2%	3	100%	2	50%
Teacher	15	60%	151	53.4%	3	100%	1	25%
Media specialist	1	4%	38	13.4%	3	100%	4	100%
Friend	8	32%	52	18.4%	2	66.7%	2	50%
Others (please specify)	8	32%	85	30.0%	3	100%	1	25%

Table 9

The person encouraging school library media use

by school type.

Person	Frequency N=315			Percent				
	Private N=25		Public N=283		Parochial N=3		Home N=4	
Parent/Guardian	7	28%	79	27.9%	1	33.3%	1	25%
Teacher	20	80%	211	74.6%	3	100%	1	25%
Media Specialist	3	12%	79	27.9%	3	100%	4	100%
Friend	2	8%	27	9.5%	3	100%	1	25%
Others (please specify)	5	20%	47	16.6%	3	100%	2	50%

Tables 6 and 7 show the individual(s) who encouraged students the most to use both public libraries and school libraries media centers. Tables 8 and 9 show a cross tabulation of those encouraging library use by school type. Tables 8 and 9 also show home-school students indicating they were encouraged by a media specialist to use both the public library and the school library media center one hundred percent of the time. It is not clear whether these respondents really understand who media specialists are.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What type of materials do middle and high school students use in the public library? Survey questions 8 and 9 were designed to explore this question.

Table 10

Type of materials used in the public library

Typical Material	Frequency N=315	Percent
Reference	254	80.6
Non-Fiction	213	67.6
Fiction	191	60.6
Newspapers	91	28.9
Magazines	158	50.2
Audio	29	9.2
Video	54	17.1
Other (Please specify)	15	4.8

Table 11

Subject areas used in public library

Subject	Frequency N=315	Percent
Foreign Language	66	21
English	169	53.7
Mathematics	54	17.1
Science	175	55.6
Social Studies	213	67.6
Other (Please specify)	33	10.5

Table 10 shows that students use mostly reference (80.6) and non-fiction (67.6) materials, in the public library. The subject areas most frequently used in the public library by middle and high school students are social studies (67.6%), science (55.6%), and English (53.7%) as shown in Table 11).

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

How often do middle and high school students use public libraries, compared to how often they use school library media centers? Survey questions 11, 12, 13, and 14 answered this question. Respondents were asked to indicate the number of times they visited the public library last fall quarter, and how many times they have visited the public library this winter quarter. Tables 12 and 13 show the results. Similar questions were posed to respondents regarding visits to the school library media center during the

same periods. Twenty-three percent reported that they have visited the public library seven or more times during this winter quarter and 21 percent reported the same number of visits to the school library media center, indicating no significance difference exits. The results of the school library media center visits are displayed on tables 14 and 15.

Table 12

Number of times you visited the public library last fall quarter.

CHOICES	FREQUENCY	%
None	29	9.2
1-2	45	14.3
3-4	80	25.4
5-6	51	16.2
7 or More	110	34.9
Total	315	100

Table 13

Number of times you visited the school library media center last fall quarter.

CHOICES	FREQUENCY	%
None	36	11.4
1-2	72	22.9
3-4	75	23.8
5-6	38	12.1
7 or More	94	29.8
Total	315	100

Table 14

Number of times you have visited the public this winter quarter.

CHOICES	FREQUENCY	%
None		
1-2	98	31.1
3-4	81	25.7
5-6	64	20.3
7 or More	72	22.9
Total	315	100

Table 15

Number of times have you visited the school library media center this winter quarter.

CHOICES	FREQUENCY	%
None	56	17.78
1-2	88	27.94
3-4	75	23.81
5-6	31	9.84
7 or More	65	20.63
Total	315	100

Information on Tables 12, 13, 14, and 15 are cross-tabulated by school type and displayed on Tables 16, 17, 18 and 19.

Table 16
Visits to public libraries last fall quarter by school type.

	Frequency									
SCHOOL TYPE	None		1-2		3-4		5-6		7 or More	
Public N=283	27	9.5%	38	13.4%	73	25.8%	47	16.6%	98	34.6%
Home N=4	-		-		2	50%	-		2	50%
Private N=25	2	8%	7	28%	5	20%	4	16%	7	28%
Parochial N=3	-		-		-		-		3	100%

Table 17

Visits to school library media centers last fall quarter by school type.

SCHOOL TYPE	Frequency									
	None		1-2		3-4		5-6		7 or More	
Public N=283	31	11.0%	63	22.3%	67	23.7%	37	13.1%	85	30.0%
Home N=4	-		1	25.0%	-		1	25.0%	2	50%
Private N=25	4	16%	8	32%	8	32%	-		5	20%
Parochial N=3	1	33.3%	-		-		-		2	66.7%

Table 18

Visits to the public library this winter quarter by school type.

School type	Frequency							
	None		1-2		3-4		5-6		7 or more	
Public N=283	89	31.45%	69	24.38%	58	20.49%	67	23.67%
Home N=4	1	25.00%	-	0.00%	1	25.00%	2	50.00%
Private N=25	8	32.00%	10	40.00%	4	16.00%	3	12.00%
Parochial N=3	-	0.00%	2	66.67%	1	33.33%	-	0.00%

Table 19

Visits to the school library media center this winter quarter.

by school type

School type	Frequency									
	None		1-2		3-4		5-6		7 or more	
Public N=283	49	17.31%	78	27.56%	68	24.03%	28	9.89%	60	21.20%
Home N=4	1	25.00%		0.00%	1	25.00%	1	25.00%	1	25.00%
Private N=25	5	20.00%	10	40.00%	6	24.00%	2	8.00%	2	8.00%
Parochial N=3	1	33.33%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	2	66.67%

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Demographic Information

Grade Level Forty percent of the respondents (126) were in grades six to eight. Respondents in grades nine through ten (94 or 29.8%) and those in grades eleven and twelve (95 or 30.2%) were separated by less than one percentage point.

Location The Wesley Chapel branch library had the greatest number of respondents (151 or 47.9%). The Decatur branch was close with 120 (38.1%), and the Chamblee branch had 44 (14%) of the respondents.

Type of school Public school students account for 283 (89.8%) of the respondents; Twenty-five (7.9%) attend private schools; 3 (1%) attend parochial schools; and 4 (1.3%) attend home schools. Tables 20, 21, and 22 clearly show all demographic data.

Table 20
Grade Level of Respondents

Grade level	Number N=315	Percent
6-8	126	40.0
9-10	94	29.8
11-12	95	30.2
Total	315	100

Table 21

Geographic location of the sites used for the survey

Location	Number of Respondents N=315	Percent
Wesley Chapel	151	47.9
Decatur	120	38.1
Chamblee	44	14.0
Total	315	100

The Wesley Chapel Library Branch is located about one hundred yards from the a public school and has a walk path directly linking the library and the public school. The effect the proximity of the public library to the public school has on the students was not analyzed.

Table 22

Type of school respondents attend

Type of School	Number N=315	Percent
Public	283	89.8
Private	25	7.9
Home	4	1.3
Parochial	3	1.0
Total	315	100

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Findings

In regard to the first research question, this study found that students use the public libraries because of the following reasons:

* The possibility of finding needed materials is three times greater in the public library than in the school library media center.
* There are more available materials.
* There is more variety of materials.
* They receive good reference services.
* It is easier to find needed materials.
* There are more computer resources.
* They find public library staff helpful.

Parents and guardians are the greatest influence on students' public library use behavior. Teachers' influence is the major reason students use the school library media center.

Research question 2 sought to determine the type of materials students use in the public library. Two survey questions designed to elicit the broadest answers sought to find out the type of materials and subject areas most frequently used in the public library by the students. Reference materials are the most heavily used, followed by non-fiction, fiction, and magazines. As for the most frequently used subject areas, social studies tops the list followed by science and English.

No significant difference was found between the frequency with which students use

the public library and the frequency with which they use the school library media center. When separated by school type however, parochial school students visited both the public library and the school library media center more often than students from other school types in the study.

Discussion

Several of the findings of this study support the findings of previous research in the subject area. Miller and Russell (1985) found that students use academic libraries more often than they use school library media centers because their needs were not being met adequately by their school library media center. This study found that middle and high school students use the public library because they often find needed materials, receive good reference service, the library staff is helpful, and needed materials are more easily found.

Hinchley (1980) stated that 76% of student users of public libraries use them for school assignments. The present study found that 67.6% of student users of public libraries use materials on social studies, 55.6% use materials on science, and 53.7% use materials on English.

Contrary to the findings that school children use more non-fiction materials from the school library media center but check out mostly leisure readings from the public library (Garland 1989), this study found that 80.6% of student users of the public library use reference materials, 67.6% of them use non-fiction materials compared to 60.6% that use fiction materials.

The assumption by some public librarians that students use the public library because of "something they are not getting in the schools" (Clancy, cited in Rome, 1992)is

supported by the findings of this study. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that their public library use behavior was influenced by a parent/guardian, but seventy-five percent or students credited their teachers for school library media center use. This may seem to refute Clancy (cited in Rome, 1992) but could be explained by this study's finding of media specialists' poor performance in encouraging students to use libraries.

Caywood (1991) thinks that lack of clear communication on the part of school teachers is the major reason why students turn to public libraries for help. Hinchley (1980) stated that only nine percent of the students in his study were referred by their teachers to use the public library for school assignments. In this study, fifty-four percent of students were encouraged to use the public library by their teachers.

There is no significant difference between the number of times students visited the public library and the number of times they visited the school library media center. The only significant difference found relates to the disparity in number of library visits by school type. Home-schooled and parochial students showed a consistent visiting pattern of both the public library and the school library media center, during last fall quarter. It is not clear, though, which school library media centers home-schooled students were referring to and how they gained access to those library media centers. It is therefore doubtful that this group of respondents really understood what school library media center meant. The disparity in the results of the two questions about how many times students visited both the public library and the school library media center, could be attributed to the fact that the survey was conducted in the middle of the Winter quarter. Research has found that home-schooled students rely heavily on the public library

(Schwartz, 1991; Madden, 1991; LaRue and LaRue, 1991). The findings of this study supports home-schooled students heavy reliance on the public library.

Review of the literature showed that there is a correlation between increase in students' use of public libraries and students' progression in age or grade level (Benford, cited in Craver, 1978, p. 60; Miller, 1978,; and Squire, Applebee, & Lucas, cited in Craver, 1978). This study, rather, found that students in grades six to eight frequented the public library the most, sixty-one percent of them, compared to thirteen percent of students in grades nine to ten and thirty-eight percent of students in grades eleven to twelve. The study also found that students in grades six to eight own more public library cards (34%), compared to students in grades nine to ten (25%), and students in grades eleven to twelve(25%). The result of the study partly supports Benford (cited in Craver, 1978) but shows no consistency upon which to establish a pattern, although it shows that public school students' use of the public library seems to decline as they moved to higher grade levels, albeit slightly.

The findings of this study were limited to middle and high school students using three DeKalb County public libraries. This limitation in scope could account for some of the discrepancies in the findings of this study and the findings of previous studies. A future study may need to broaden the scope to include a longer period for data collection, to compensate for any intervening variable that might have affected students' library use behavior during the short period allotted to this study. The scope of a future study may also be broadened to include a large population sample.

Two or more studies could be conducted concurrently to provide opportunity for comparative analyses of data, which will help to determine if any consistent pattern of students' public library use exists.

The impact of socio-economic status, race, and differences in school types are some factors that a future study may want to consider.

Applications

The findings of this study could be used both by media specialists and public librarians to provide more efficient and better services to the entire student population. The poor performance rating of media specialists by students, on who encourage them to use libraries, could be used by media specialists to strengthen those areas of service in which they are lacking. The school media center is, or should be, the hub around which the wheel (the school) spins. Media specialists therefore should pay special attention to students' needs and frustrations. Communication with teachers, bibliographic instructions, and provision and organization of materials for easier retrieval must be put on the priority list. A periodic survey of students and teachers to ascertain their experiences with the school library media center will greatly help the media specialist to keep in touch with the needs of the school. Knowledge obtained from this will help the media specialist to improve on current services by making necessary changes as needs arise.

The results of this study highlights the need for cooperation between public librarians and media specialists and could be used by both to seek and find more collaborative ways to work with one the other.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please respond to the following questions by circling the answer that best describes you.

1. What is your grade level?
   A. 6-8
   B. 9-10
   C. 11-12

2. What type of school do you attend?
   A. Private
   B. Public
   C. Parochial
   D. Home

3. Do you have a public library card?
   A. Yes
   B. No

4. How often do you find what you are looking for in the public library?
   A. Rarely
   B. Sometimes
   C. Most of the time

5. How often do you find what you are looking for in your school library media center?
   A. Rarely
   B. Sometimes
   C. Most of the time

6. Why do you use the public library? (circle as many as apply to you)
   A. A place to wait for a ride home
   B. Easy to find materials
   C. To meet your friends
   D. Library is close to home
   E. Variety of materials are available
   F. Good reference services
   G. Helpful library staff
   H. Freedom from parent or teacher
   I. Computer resources
   J. Other (please specify)_____

7. Who encourages you to use the public library? (circle as many as apply to you)

   A. Parent/guardian
   B. Teacher
   C. Media Specialist
   D. Friend
   E. Other (please specify)_____

8. Who encourages you to use your school library media center? (circle as many as apply)
   A. Parent/guardian
   B. Teacher
   C. Library media specialist
   D. Friend
   E. Other (please specify)_____

9. What type of materials do you use in the public library? (circle as many as apply)
   A. Reference
   B. Non-fiction
   C. Fiction
   D. Newspapers
   E. Magazines
   F. Audio
   G. Video
   H. Other (please specify)_____

10. In which of these subject areas do you use materials in the public library? (circle as many as apply)
   A. Foreign language
   B. English
   C. Mathematics
   D. Science
   E. Social studies
   F. Other (please specify)_____

11. How many times did you visit the public library last Fall quarter?
   A. None
   B. 1-2
   C. 3-4
   D. 5-6
   E. 7 or more

12. How many times did you visit your school library media center last Fall quarter?
    A. None
    B. 1-2
    C. 3-4
    D. 5-6
    E. 7 or more

13. How many times have you visited the public library this Winter quarter?
    A. 1-2
    B. 3-4
    C. 5-6
    D. 7 or more

14. How many times have you visited your school library media center this Winter quarter?
    A. None
    B. 1-2
    C. 3-4
    D. 5-6
    E. 7 or more

APPENDIX B

Letter of Request to Distribute Survey at Branch Libraries

Georgia State University

University Plaza • Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3083

January 19, 1994

Ms. Donna Mancini
Director
Dekalb County Public Library
215 Sycamore St.
Decatur, GA 30030

Dear Donna,

Enclosed please find a copy of the research proposal being done by Emmanual Enujioke under the auspices of Georgia State University for his Education Specialist Degree.

Chapter one discusses the problem, Chapter Two describes some of the related research and Chapter Three gives the proposed procedures for carrying out the study.

We are hopeful that procedurally this proposal will work in the Dekalb County Public Library system. However, we are willing to make necessary non-detrimental adjustments as needed to implement the proposal. Your suggestions are appreciated.

Please call me at 651-2460 at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Allan Spanjer
Professor
Library Media Technology

Georgia State University is committed to the principle of affirmative action, equal opportunity and diversity in the workplace and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.

APPENDIX C

Follow-Up Letter of Request

6475 Emerald Pointe Circle
College Park, Georgia 30349
February 8, 1994

Ms. Donna Mancini
Director
DeKalb County Public Library
215 Sycamore street
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Dear Ms. Mancini,

As a follow up to the sample questionnaire Dr. Spanjer sent to you, on my behalf, I am sending the names of DeKalb Public Library branches selected for the survey. Also included are the exact dates and times I plan to be at each of the branches.

The three branches selected are as follows:

1. The Chamblee Branch. Survey will be distributed at this branch on February 21, 1994, and February 23, 1994, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., on both days.
2. The Decatur Branch. Survey will be distributed at this branch on February 19, 1994, from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 p.m., and on February 22, 1994, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
3. The Wesley Chapel Branch. Survey will be distributed at this branch on February 24, 1994, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and on February 26, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

I will personally distribute and collect all questionnaire; no staff participation is required. Absolute confidentiality is guaranteed to all participants.

You will be provided with the results and final analyses of this study.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Emmanuel A. Enujioke

APPENDIX D

Additional Respondents' Information

Additional Respondents' Information

Question 6 - Why do you use the public library?

A good place to study
Peaceful
Books
I work as a page and it is a good place to study
Mostly because of better resources and computer availability
I like to read
To look for certain books
My teacher makes me go
For SAT
Nice place to get work done
Good choices of books
To play
The best place to look for chicks
To do report for school
Need for knowledge
Quieter than my home
To meet people
Freedom from disturbances
Time to study carefully
To use pay phone outside the library
To meet boys

Question 7 - Who encourages you to use the public library?

My uncle
Myself
None
Auntie

Question 8 - Who encourages you to use the school library media center?

Uncle
Myself
Principal

Question 9 - What type of materials do you use in the public library?

All
History
What is needed

Question 10 - In what subject areas do you use materials in the public library?

History
Special projects